



The United Nations was founded in 1945 in order to prevent conflict and to maintain world peace. But over the decades, many have questioned the UN's impact in conflict prevention. Can an international organisation with no military power really prevent wars?

A new study published in the journal *Physica A* answers this question head on. The study presents evidence that the UN acts as more than just a bystander on world events, and that it provides a forum where diplomacy reduces the chance of war.

According to an analysis of more than 65 years of voting records conducted by Dartmouth College and The Ohio State University, the United Nations has been effective at suppressing conflict throughout its history.

In addition to analysing the UN's effectiveness at preventing war, the research also uses voting records to assess the organisation's impact on the spread of democracy and the building of defensive alliances.

“Our analysis provides evidence that the UN is more than just a witness of changing policy preferences”, said Scott Pauls, chair of the Department of Mathematics at Dartmouth College. He added that the UN “impacts future decisions, particularly by suppressing conflict”.

The review of 5,143 UN General Assembly voting records from 1946 through 2011, found that the process of nations working together over time builds trust and facilitates fast, transparent communication that raises the chance of resolving crises peacefully.

“There is more nuance in voting records than was previously thought”, said Skyler Cranmer, professor of Political Science at The Ohio State University. “The evidence demonstrates that the UN is more effective at achieving its mandate of avoiding wars than many experts think”, Cranmer concluded.

UN peacekeeping has made a real difference in conflict situations in many countries. Here are a list of recently completed or ongoing UN operations:

- [United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone](#)
- [United Nations Operation in Burundi](#)
- [United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire](#)
- [United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste](#)
- [United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo](#)

By providing basic security guarantees and responding to crises, UN operations support political transitions and help fortify fragile new state institutions. The work of the UN has helped countries to close the chapter of conflict and open a path to normal development, even if major peacebuilding challenges remain.

For more information on the UN's conflict prevention strategies, click [here](#) .

# The UN is more effective in preventing wars than many experts think

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